

Sustainability Initiatives: Wellness Tourism

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Wellness Tourism

Wellness is a dimension of health and is seen as an approach to **quality of life**. Wellness tourism can be defined as travel with the purpose of maintaining health and well-being through physical, spiritual, and psychological experiences and activities.

Wellness travel can occur internationally and domestically. Wellness encompasses the broad idea of promoting **well-being**. It can include activities such as, meditation and yoga **retreats**, spa experiences, fitness boot camps, cultural festivals, cycling excursions, agritourism, and a plethora of other opportunities to better one's self and disconnect from the over-stimulating world we currently reside in.



Economic Impact

Wellness tourism creates economic impact for communities and destinations alike. Some travelers plan an entire trip around wellness activities, while others include it as a piece of their trip. Studies show wellness tourism to have **significant economic impact** and continues to grow with increased interest by consumers and responsive sectors such as medical, parks, and spas.

A 2013 Global Wellness Tourism Economy Report found that wellness tourism is a **\$439 billion** market globally and generates **11.7 million jobs**. Growth projections are \$678.5 billion by 2017. Research has shown that those for whom wellness is their primary trip purpose **spend more** than the average global tourist.

Projected growth of wellness tourism makes this an **ideal time for Arizona** to invest further in its assets and increase marketing efforts. Arizona is ripe for economic gain from wellness tourism. In addition to the recommendations from this report, Wellness Tourism Worldwide presented a study of The Wellness Traveler for Arizona which also provides market details useful for future marketing efforts

(<https://tourism.az.gov/sites/default/files/Wellness%20Travel%20A%20Natural%20Fit%20for%20AZ%20-%20abridged%202.pdf>).

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Hot Springs

Spas often come to mind when asked about wellness tourism. Although they are a major asset in the industry of **rejuvenating experiences**, they are certainly not the only option.

Arizona has a surprisingly **large amount** of natural and man-made hot springs throughout the state.

Most of the natural hot springs require a hike into a remote area to access the relaxing experience that awaits. A day trip to one of Arizona's fine hot springs can allow for not only rejuvenation of a traveler's body, but also their mind.



Arizona Hot Springs can be located a few miles south of the Hoover Dam, nestled within a vibrantly colorful slot canyon.

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Hotels & Resorts

Hotels and resorts have been major supporters in **fueling** the **wellness tourism** industry by providing top-notch spa facilities and packages to guests.

Moving beyond the spa setting, major hospitality brands have started incorporating improved gym facilities, healthier food options, and locally sourced ingredients. A superior night's sleep is even part of Westin Hotels' vision with their Heavenly Bed.

Arizona, among many things, is known for its warm weather as a destination to escape cooler places. There are several luxury hotel and resort communities throughout the state, thus, there are **numerous opportunities** to promote and incorporate wellness tourism in already existing facilities and future properties.



Element by Westin (a Starwood Hotel property) was created to focus on promoting balance and well-being. Their philosophy and design both were created to ensure a relaxing environment, enabling growth and prosperity during a traveler's stay.

www.starwoodhotels.com/element

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Diversity of Natural Environment (Wild Harvesting/Foraging)

The fauna and flora of the Southwest is unlike many others. Northern Arizona has the **largest stretch** of Ponderosa Pine trees in the U.S. The Sonoran Desert, to the south is the **only place** the Saguaro Cactus resides. The state is home to a plethora of medicinal and edible herbs, plants, and fungi.

Although there are some **medicinal plant tours** in Arizona, the information online is difficult to locate. For the establishments and groups that offer these types of tours, checking their online presence is advised for higher rankings within search engines.



Prickly Pear Cactus, scientific name, *Opuntia littoralis* var. *vaseyi*

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Diversity of Natural Environment (Wild Harvesting/Foraging)

Edible - Medicinal Desert Plants Walk Guided By David Morris June 26 , Sunday

8am > next walk is July 24

Explore our Curandero Trail on a one-hour walk guided by Choctaw Nation member and ethno-botanist David Morris on June 26. learn about prickly pear cacti, ratany, agaves, jojobas -- and the ways native plants have fed, healed and clothed Sonoran desert peoples for more than one thousand years. On July 24 our special guest leaders for the walk are local authors and desert plant enthusiasts Kathy and Tom McDonald, owners of [Smiling Dog Landscapes in Gold Canyon](#)

** Please note: this guided tour explores the Curandero Trail, which has **steep sections that are not suitable** for visitors who use wheelchairs or walkers [Read more about jojoba, creosote and prickly pears](#)

Boyce Thompson Arboretum, in Superior Arizona, offers guided medicinal desert plant walks on a monthly basis.
www.ag.arizona.edu/bta



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- Wine Tours**
- Cooking Classes**
- Horseback**
- Balloon Flights**
- Truffle Hunting**
- Foraging Guides**
- Taxi & Transfers**
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- Concierge**
- Exclusive tours**
- Luxury Vacations**

Foraging

Edible wild Herbs & Flowers picking course

A day to discover the treasures hidden in the endless green countryside of Montalcino & the Val d'Orcia, among the hills, fields and olive groves. A unique experience to mend the broken thread that united us time to Mother Nature.

Walk with an expert over the rolling hills of Montalcino as you look for edible wild flowers, herbs and fruits. Learn about the **tools** used and the best **times of year** to pick wild herbs in addition to **picking techniques**, choosing, **cleaning and conserving** them. Some secrets about their use in the kitchen and their medicinal purposes will also be revealed.

Montalcino Wine Tours, of Tuscany Italy, offer a foraging experience for edible wild herbs and flowers. The course teaches picking techniques, tools used, and cleaning and conservation practices, to name a few.

www.montalcinowinetours.com

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Diversity of Natural Environment (Outdoor Adventure)

Physical, mental, and spirit-enhancing experiences can be found in the **great outdoors**, and Arizona has nearly **limitless opportunities**.

Whether it be in the cooler temperatures of the north, or the rocky desert terrain of the south, there are a number of outdoor adventure opportunities to experience throughout the state. Some examples include, SUPing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, and skiing/snowboarding in the winter months.

Pairing outdoor adventure packages with rejuvenating offers is a great way to promote both active and relaxing components of well-being.

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Diversity of Natural Environment (Outdoor Adventure)



MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDING TECHNIQUES

Build on the concepts and skills taught in the mountain bike basics class with this physically challenging, 3-5 mile off-road adventure. Previous mountain biking experience is recommended.

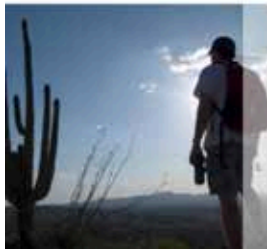
* Wear or Bring: Sturdy closed-toed shoes, comfortable clothing for riding, sunscreen and perhaps a hat. Don't forget your Miraval water bottle!



MOUNTAIN BIKING INTERMEDIATE

Take your mountain biking to the next level! Apply the skills you learned in Mountain Biking Basics and Mountain Bike Riding Techniques or from your own previous experience to this challenging, 8-13 mile ride. Previous mountain biking experience is required.

* Wear or Bring: Sturdy closed-toed shoes, comfortable clothing for riding, sunscreen and perhaps a hat. Don't forget your Miraval water bottle!



NATURE HIKE

Join us for a slower paced, more interpretive version of our Outback hike in the desert surrounding Miraval. Learn about the Sonoran desert landscape as it melds with the 9000' Santa Catalina Mountains. The guides will introduce you the many plants and wildlife that flourish in this incredibly diverse environment, while hiking 2-4 miles with moderate elevation gain.

**Periodically Offered*

Miraval Resort & Spa in Tucson provides a variety of retreat packages and outdoor experiences. Package options consist of hiking, mountain biking, yoga, meditation, and wellness lectures, and meals are locally sourced with seasonally fresh ingredients. Spa treatments are also available.

<http://www.miravalresorts.com>

Arizona Wellness Tourism Assets: Diversity of Natural Environment (Vortex Energy)

As another opportunity, for those seeking **spiritual healing**, Arizona has 15 vortex sites surrounding Sedona in a ten mile radius. Sedona is recognized as one of the most beautiful places in Arizona and the U.S.

The type of vortex Sedona hosts is considered to be a giant magnet of energy that is either **positively** or negatively charged. A positively charged vortex is considered feminine and has attributes such as, nurturing, **calming**, tranquil and considered yin. A negatively charged vortex is masculine and has attributes that are active, **energizing**, and considered yang. A vortex of this sense cannot typically be seen, however, the concentrated energy can be felt.

The vortexes of Sedona have been a spiritual marvel of many for several years. Whether visitors come to feel the energy on their own or through a tour, the **mystical experience** should continue to be utilized as an extremely unique wellness feature of the state.

Other Best Practices

When crafting future marketing campaigns and wellness tourism initiatives, consideration should be made to appeal to a **wider audience** than the luxury market. Spas and other wellness activities often have a connotation of being pricey, yet wellness activities can appeal to a larger audience if marketed correctly. Programs should exist in Arizona that are accessible to varying income levels and wellness travel experience levels. As with any market, those new to wellness programs will be attracted by different programs and attributes than those experienced in wellness travel. Using words such as “**relaxing**” and “**fun**” can be more appealing to visitors rather than “wellness.”



Resources

Arizona American Indian Tourism Association

<http://www.arizonaindiantourism.org>

Arizona Experience - Medicinal and Edible Flora Resource

www.arizonaexperience.org/land

Arizona Spa and Wellness Association

<http://azspawell.com>

Forager's Harvest

www.foragersharvest.com

Global Wellness Tourism Economy Report

http://www.esteswellness.com/assets/wellness_tourism_economy_exec_sum_final_10022013.pdf

Guide to Arizona Trails and Hot Springs

www.trails.com

Medicinal Plants of the Southwest

<http://medplant.nmsu.edu>

Sedona Vortexes

<http://www.wildsedona.com/area/vortex.htm>

Wellness Tourism Worldwide

www.wellnesstourismworldwide.com